1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMUNITY

602 539 533

I have a thousand people besides my paternal and maternal uncles.'
When the patient's mother heard the conversation, she offered the doctor her necklace and bracelets.
When the father heard about this, he offered his land and property.
When the sister heard about this, she offered her anklets and earrings.
When his people (i.e. joint family) heard about this, they said 'We shall all pay it with no fuss or difficulty'.

This support shows itself not only when the relatives and friends go to visit the sick person in the village, irrespective as to whether the disease is infectious or not, but also when they visit him in hospital in town. If the person recovers from a serious illness, or comes back home after being away for some time, the people go to congratulate him for his recovery or for his return home by saying 'Let us thank God for your safety'. 602

To take another example, if a cow or a camel has been seriously injured in an accident, it is killed, and the owner's relatives, neighbours, and friends are morally compelled to buy a portion of the meat to part-compensate for the loss. If a person's animal dies he is consoled by others with the invocation 'May God compensate you'.

Death is another major event in which the family finds itself supported by condolences and sympathies of kinsfolk. If the deceased belongs to the category of youngsters, condolence is compulsory on the clan and intimate friends only. If he belongs to the second and third categories of age groups (unmarried or adults) the whole village has to condole with the sufferers. In death, more than in any other event, kinship ties are the most important factor in deciding one's social obligations. It is incumbent on the close relatives both paternal and maternal, as well as in-laws, to stay away from work and remain in the guest house for ten or fifteen days, and frequently sleep there, or in the case of women, in the house of the deceased relative. Close relatives have to assist in conveying the funeral bier to the cemetery, to mourn the deceased more than others, and to send food to the guest house and to the house of the deceased, normally an obligation more upon the clan house-heads and the close maternal relatives than upon any others. 602 765 [764] [613]

The same solidarities and mutual family and clan obligations manifest themselves on occasions of rejoicing such as birth, circumcision and weddings, by sending gifts, food, by helping in the preparation of the ceremony, or at least by merely attending in the case of men or sending out a joy-cry in the case of women. 602 [431]

Moreover, the social structure functions also as a means of mediation in the sectional frictions that are bound to arise. In the following example, which the writer witnessed, the head members of a clan mediated between 613 627

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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solid round band, or of silver or gold. The ornaments of the less wealthy peasants are usually made of cheap materials, though some women may be lucky enough to possess one gold or silver bracelet.

In some parts of Egypt, at any rate, the unmarried girl is not supposed to wear many bracelets at once, and her ornaments generally are not so numerous or so massive as those of the married woman. However, when she is anxious to marry she will somewhat overload herself with jewellery, cheap or otherwise, and, not content with her ear- and nose-rings and her somewhat massive necklace, she often hangs gold, silver, or brass ornaments from the kerchief which she ties round her head, the latter ornaments being attached in such a way that they hang over her forehead.

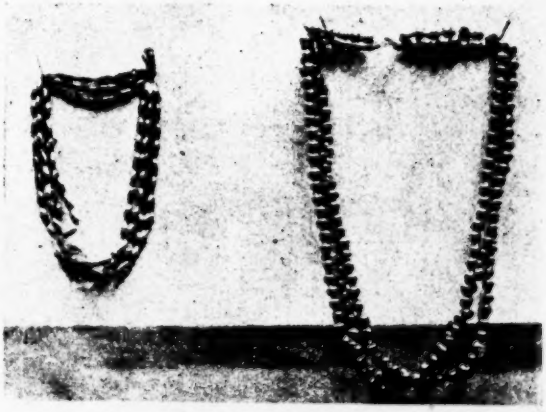

FIG. 19. MOURNING NECKLACES OF DARK BLUE BEADS

In some parts of Egypt a girl on becoming a bride may don such a number of glass bracelets of various colours that they completely cover both arms from wrist to elbow! Silver or white metal bracelets of particular design may also now be worn by her. I was told in Asyūṭ Province that unmarried girls are never allowed to wear this type of bracelet, which is thus a means of indicating social status.

A red heart-shaped ornament, attached either to a silver chain or to a necklace of red beads, is worn by women suffering from sheikh-possession.[1] A necklace of light blue beads, or even a single bead of this colour, is often worn as a charm against the evil eye. It will thus be seen from these two examples—and there are many others—that ornaments may have a utilitarian as well as a decorative value.

[1] See Chapter XI.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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765 301 When a woman's husband dies one of the first things she does is to take off all her jewellery—nose-ring, earrings, finger-rings, gold, silver, or brass bracelets—wearing instead a necklace of dark blue or black beads (Fig. 19) and sometimes blue or black earrings and bracelets. The nose-ring is discarded for good, unless she marries again.

682 765 301 Knowledge of this custom is sometimes very useful. I was calling on a certain Captain of Police one day and happened to arrive at the moment when he was investigating a case of murder. An old man had been waylaid not far from his village and killed, but all his fellow-villagers declared that they knew nothing whatever about it. The wife, a son by a former marriage, and some other relations had been locked up pending investigations. The wife, very negroid [142] in type, as, indeed, were many of the people of her village, was, together with her stepson, undergoing examination when I arrived. The officer strongly suspected that the wife was implicated, and possibly the stepson also. The woman was much younger than her husband, who was, for a *fellāḥ*, a man of some substance. I watched the woman carefully while she was being questioned, and she certainly was far from prepossessing in appearance. On looking more closely I noticed that she was still wearing all her ornaments of gold and other materials, including her nose-ring. If she had really cared anything about her unfortunate husband she would have removed them immediately upon hearing that he was dead. I asked my friend the Captain of Police if he had noticed this, and then pointed out to him how many ornaments she was still wearing. He was delighted with this piece of evidence, which had quite escaped his notice, and which certainly went to confirm his suspicion. This incident shows that a knowledge of personal adornment, and of the customs associated with certain ornaments, may be quite useful to officials who are concerned with criminal investigation among the *fellāḥīn*.

304 554 789 Among the *fellāḥīn* it is usually the custom to pierce one ear of a young boy if he is an only son, and in this ear he wears a decorative ring (Fig. 20). When he gets older he discards the ring, but the perforation is always visible. No reason was given for this custom, but I suspect it is most likely a method of protection against the evil eye, and is possibly regarded as a means of disguising his sex.

000 Tattooing is another form of personal decoration. It is popular

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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and with them it is possibly a racial mark, but the following information was given to me by an Egyptian woman whom I questioned on the subject. Among the *fellāḥīn* the notches are cut when there is supposed to be something wrong with the inside of a child's mouth, and the operation is performed in babyhood. A midwife acts as the surgeon in such cases. She cuts the notch, or notches, with a pair of scissors, and the blood from the wound is rubbed on the roof of the child's mouth. If the mouth is very bad more than one notch is cut.

Long hair is certainly considered a woman's glory in Egypt, though I have rarely, if ever, seen really thick, long hair among the *fellāḥīn* women and girls. However, this defect is easily remedied, and every woman buys long plaits of false hair, which hang down far below her waist. She cuts her hair short on either side of her face, and forms this short hair into flat curls against her cheeks. Over her head she ties a silk or cotton kerchief, a brightly coloured one if she is young, a more sombre one if she has passed her youth, and this keeps the side curls in position. The hair is not dressed every day, but when it is done a double wooden comb is used (Fig. 26), with fine and coarse teeth. The centre of the comb is usually decorated with coloured designs.

FIG. 26. DOUBLE WOODEN COMB

The long plaits worn by the peasant women are utilitarian as well as decorative. The house-door key is often attached to one of the plaits when the housewife goes off either to shop or to the fields, while from the others hang various charms, some of which are enclosed in small leather cases. One woman I know wore a charm against headache enclosed in a leather case, and also a large opaque bead to keep her husband's love and to make his mother pleased with her. Both these charms were attached to one of her plaits, and she gave me the bead after her husband died.

When a woman becomes a widow she immediately conceals the side curls; in fact, no hair must be seen round her face—it is tucked away under a dark blue or a black kerchief. She wears it like this all her life, unless she remarries, in which case the curls

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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again appear, and the mourning kerchief is replaced by one of brighter hue. Should a woman do this before her second husband is secured the whole village knows that she is anxious to marry again.

Women, especially when the hair begins to turn grey, often dye it with *henna*, which stains it a bright red. This may be done by a woman who, wishing to obtain another husband, endeavours to obliterate the signs of advancing years. One day when visiting a village where I have often stayed for many weeks at a time I saw an old crone performing her toilet on the roof of her house. She was combing out her very scanty locks, which were dyed a bright red. Unfortunately, she had not been altogether successful with her hair-tinting, for considerable patches of white hair were still plainly visible. I asked a woman friend of mine, in whose house I was sitting, if the old woman wanted to marry again. She laughed, and said that she believed that this was so! I never heard that she met with any sort of success in that direction!

The men either have their hair cut quite short, or else they have the head shaved altogether. Some of them, however, leave one lock of hair at the back of the head, allowing it to grow quite long, even though the rest of the head may be closely shaved. One man told me that he wore this lock of hair so that when he died the men who washed him might not have to touch his head, but could hold it by this lock. I gathered that he thought that it would defile him if they caught hold of his head, but I am not sure about this point. My brother, Dr A. M. Blackman, tells me that a man told him that the object of the lock was to prevent those who washed a corpse from raising the head by putting a hand into the mouth and so possibly defiling the dead.

The men usually shave all the hair off the face, except the moustache. Old men, however, frequently allow the beard to grow, as it is looked upon as a mark of honour at that time of life. Most of the body hair of both sexes is shaved off, to ensure ceremonial purity.

A child often has the hair shaved off just above the forehead. In some parts of Egypt this is considered to be a good thing for the eyes, as it is believed that the hair growing on that part of the head is injurious to the eyesight when the child is very young. The shaven portion is often covered with *henna*. Another special

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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form of hair-cutting for very young boys is dealt with in the following chapter.

After a death the male relatives of the deceased will often allow the hair on the face and head to grow for some time as a sign of mourning.

An Egyptian woman who fears that her facial beauty is beginning to fade, and who wishes to obliterate lines on her face and to obtain a nice pink complexion, will proceed in the following way. She takes a quantity of sugar and a little alum, and boils them together in a small quantity of water till the concoction becomes thick and brown like toffee; the pan is then removed from the fire. When the toffee-like substance is cool enough she takes some of it and pinches it up between her fingers and thumb and applies it to her face, where it sticks; she then pulls it off. She massages the whole of her face in this way, or she may get a friend to do it for her (see Fig. 27), till the skin becomes very pink and also the soft, downy hairs are pulled out. Her husband, on coming home, will admire her complexion and be 'pleased' (*mabsūṭ*) with her, and the woman herself will thus be gratified. I know a woman who, in order to excite her husband's admiration, treats her face in this way every day! After being thus massaged the face is washed with pink soap, and then a pink powder may also be applied. Many of the vainer of the peasant women regularly make use of this treatment in order to beautify themselves. I have myself seen the face

FIG. 27. WOMAN HAVING HER FACE MASSAGED

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291 money, usually the Egyptian pound, and, according to my in-
301 formant, they represent the money given to the bride before her
554 marriage; thus the wealth of a woman may be estimated by look-
ing at her veil. I have not yet visited Sharḳīyeh Province, and have therefore not had the opportunity of verifying this statement myself.

291 To draw the veil over the lower part of the face is a sign of respect
554 for superiors, as well as a means of concealing the face from the gaze of men. For the former reason the women when passing me in the roads usually draw the veil over the face, however old they
[602] may be. Black and dark blue are mourning colours, and a dress
● 765 of the latter colour is always worn in the house by a widow in place
[589] of the brighter coloured one which she wore before her husband died. She also wears a dark blue kerchief on her head, with a black veil over it when out of doors.

291 Men do not make any change in their attire after losing a relative,
301 but some, as I have already stated, refrain from shaving, and let
765 the head and facial hair grow long for some time after the death of a near, and especially a male, relative.

291 The loose, flowing robes of both men and women are admirably adapted to the climate, and it is much to be hoped that the custom of wearing the native dress will not die out. Much of the picturesqueness of the country would go if European dress became the fashion in Egyptian villages, and, moreover, the native costume is infinitely healthier and more comfortable in the hot, dry climate of the Nile Valley.

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selves outside the doorway, where they are joined by friends, all observing almost complete silence, except on arrival, when they may say, "*El-bakīyeh fi ḥayātak*"—literally, "May what remains over be in your life!"—*i.e.*, "May the rest of the days of the dead be added to your life!"

The female mourners, including the professional wailers, congregate together, either inside the house or in some secluded spot outside. Here they continue to utter their piercing cries, and usually also engage in a dance. The dancers, each one swaying slightly backward and forward, move in a circle, smiting their cheeks the while with both hands in rhythmic accompaniment to their chanting and cries. I have seen women thus beating their cheeks till blood flowed. One of the dancers often beats a *nadam*, a single-membrane drum, resembling a tambourine, but without jingles.

The mourning ceremonies are continued for seven days, though very occasionally they may last for three days only. The first evening after the burial *fukahā* come to the house, one of them bringing a large rosary, called a *sibḥeh*, consisting of five hundred to a thousand large beads. They repeat passages from the Ḳorān a thousand times, keeping count of the recitations by means of the beads. The merit of this religious exercise is conveyed to the deceased. During the period of mourning *fukahā* come daily to the house to recite the Ḳorān, but the ceremony with the rosary is performed on the first night only.

The *fukahā* are usually given a small sum of money for their services, and also at intervals in their recitations they are refreshed with coffee and cigarettes, but no one, either performer or listener, would ever think of smoking while they are in progress. I have been present several times on such occasions, and have been much impressed by the excellence of many of the voices, as well as by the reverent attitude of all the people present. The *fukahā* sit cross-legged on a bench inside the house, and, as they recite, sway from side to side, holding one hand against one side of the face. One of them usually acts as leader, and the others join in as a chorus; or sometimes the chief *fikīh* will tell one of his subordinates to take his place and recite. The recitations last for an hour or more.

On the seventh day after a death the mourning at the house ceases, and the women, accompanied by their male relatives, visit the grave. They bring loaves of bread, called *kaḥk*, which are

DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

either round and somewhat flat or ring-shaped. A number of very poor people and *fuḳahā* follow the mourners to the cemetery. The bread is given away to the poor in the name of the dead, and the *fuḳahā* also receive their share in return for recitations from the Ḳorān at the graveside. These men may receive small sums of money for their services in addition to the gifts of bread. The visit is repeated on the fifteenth and fortieth days after the death (see also pp. 117 ff.)

It is customary to engage two or three *fuḳahā* to give recitations regularly two or three times a year in a house where a death has taken place, to ensure the welfare of the deceased. Some people arrange for even more frequent recitations.

I will now briefly describe the various kinds of graves I have seen. The structure varies according to the nature of the ground in which the cemetery is situated. In some parts of Egypt the dead are buried along the lower desert. In this case the grave is not usually prepared beforehand, but a number of men, carrying the necessary implements for digging, accompany the funeral procession. When they arrive at the selected spot the bier on which the body lies is placed on the ground, and a shawl is fixed on sticks stuck into the ground to act as a temporary wind-screen. The diggers then set to work, and, after removing the covering of sand, dig a rectangular pit in the underlying limestone rock, oriented east and west. On the south side of the pit[1] a recess is cut, large enough to admit the corpse, which is lifted into its last resting-place by some of the men present, and with its head toward the west—*i.e.*, looking east toward Mecca. The recess is then bricked over in such a way that a chamber is formed of sufficient size to admit of the deceased sitting up in it. This is necessary on account of the belief that when the two examining angels visit the grave on the first night after burial the dead must be able to sit up while they question him. For this reason also the cords or tapes which are bound round the wrappings of the dead must be unfastened as soon as the body is laid in the grave. When the recess has been bricked over the pit is filled up and the sand piled in a mound over it, palm-branches being stuck into the sand to surmount the whole.

Sometimes instead of the mound of sand a brick superstructure such as is described below is erected above the grave. The above-

[1] So in the case of two interments that I have witnessed.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

F
That the souls of the dead come to the cemeteries is again shown 769
in the following belief. I have been told by two or three of my 775
village friends that when the people go to visit the cemetery, and
they see a number of small green birds near the graves, they be- F
lieve that these birds are the souls of the dead who lie buried there. [825]
Lane[1] says that "Souls of martyrs (*shuhadā*) reside in the crops
of green birds, which eat of the fruits of Paradise and drink of its
rivers." This is the belief as he heard it. It was definitely stated
to me that the green birds *are* the souls of the dead.

F
There are certain taboos on mourners, two of which are the 764
following. If a person, male or female, has attended a funeral and 765
walked in the procession, or even only gone part of the way, he or 784
she must not enter the house where a woman has a baby under
seven days old, for this will cause the mother to have no milk.
Such a person must inform the mother of the child that he desires
to enter her house, and she must then go outside to meet the visitor,
who can then come into it without any evil consequences.

F
Again, no such mourner must enter a house in which there is 765
some one suffering from sore eyes, for in that case the sufferer will 753
lose his or her sight. Such intending visitors must wait outside 784
the house, and the man or woman who has sore eyes must come out
and meet them there first, and then they can enter without danger.

F &
The death and funeral rites of the Copts are in many respects 764
very similar to those of the Muslims.

The following incidents were witnessed by me several years ago
when I was staying in a small village in Fayûm Province, and this
account of what I actually saw will best describe the ceremonies
incident to the death and burial of a Copt. It must always be re-
membered that these are accounts of death and funeral rites as
practised by the peasants only, and that they are not meant to be
a description of the ceremonies which take place among educated
people on similar occasions.

Early one morning a visitor brought to the house where I was
staying the news of the death of a poor but much respected Copt
who lived in an adjacent village. It was suggested that his rela- F &
tions and friends would much appreciate a visit from me, so I
started off on my donkey as soon as possible after the sad tidings [492]
had reached me. It was not long before I arrived at the house of

[1] *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1871), vol. i, p. 83.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Scriptures. After interminable readings and chantings there was a pause, and one of the mourners present clapped his hands, thus commanding the attention of every one in the church. He then began the funeral oration, extolling the dead man and mentioning many of his good deeds. He spoke with great fervour and sincerity, though he was himself a Muslim, and I much admired his restrained gestures, his fluency, and his clear enunciation. He was really a good speaker and entirely devoid of self-consciousness. After the speech was ended the candles were put out and removed from the sides of the coffin, the lid was replaced, the bearers hoisted the coffin on to their shoulders, and, preceded by the priest and the *'arīf*, walked three times round the church, followed by all the mourners. After the third perambulation they came down the centre of the building, and so out of the church to the place of burial.

There is no service at the grave among the Copts, and after loud-voiced and conflicting advice from every man in the crowd assembled round the grave the coffin was at last successfully lowered to its final resting-place, a vault in which a number of interments had already been made. Finally the opening to the vault was bricked up and the earth flung back into its place again, and we all set off for our several abodes.

The mourning at the house usually lasts for seven days, as with the Muslims, though the period is sometimes reduced to three days only. During those seven or three days, according to one of my Coptic informants, no food is cooked in the house of mourning, but supplies are brought in by village friends. According to the same informant, prayers are offered up in the church by the priest on the third, seventh, fifteenth, and fortieth days after a death; these prayers are believed to be the means of saving a lost soul. During the fifteen days the house of mourning is not swept, but no reason was given for this custom.

On the third day after a death has taken place a priest, attended by the *'arīf*, goes to the house of the dead man or woman. Some of the uneducated Copts believe that the priest on this occasion dismisses the soul of the dead person from the house, where it is believed to remain until that day. I was present for this ceremony after the death of the Copt whose funeral I described above. As his relations were very poor people the ceremony was doubtless far less elaborate than it would be in the case of people in a better position.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

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The priest, I was told, was to arrive at 3.30 P.M., so I started off for the house early in the afternoon. I found a number of women seated in an inner room, wailing and waving their coloured handkerchiefs with the usual rhythmic movements. The sister of the dead man began a long dissertation in his praise, speaking of all his good qualities and good deeds. She would speak for a short time, then pause, whereupon the wailing women would join in a rhythmic chorus of cries, occasionally uttering the customary piercing cries of grief. The sister would again take up her theme, followed shortly by the wailing women as before.

FIG. 56. COPTIC PRIEST HOLDING CROSS

E [276]
E [293] [291] [778]
E 765 788 783

Meanwhile, one of the men seated outside the house came in and handed round cigarettes. Several of the women smoked, but this form of enjoyment did not in the least interfere with, or interrupt, the wailing and screaming. Still the priest did not come, though all the arrangements for his visit had been made—a large metal basin of water being placed on a chair, with a glass decanter of water standing in it. At last, after four o'clock, he arrived with his *ʿarīf*, both of them having come from the monastery in the desert a few miles off. The priest read some prayers, after which the *ʿarīf* chanted certain passages, and then portions from the Bible were read aloud by one of the men present. Immediately upon his arrival the priest had placed a small silver cross (see Fig. 56) in the basin of water, and it remained there all the time the reading and chanting were in progress. When these were ended he removed the cross, which was, of course, dripping with water, turned to me, and pressed it on my forehead, making the sign of the cross on me at the same time. He repeated this ceremony with each of the men in turn, and then, turning toward the crowd of women, sprinkled them with some of the water from the basin. Incense had been kept burning from the moment of the priest's arrival, and he now took up the censer and advanced with it toward the room

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in which the man had died. Every one was censed as he passed toward the room, and one of the men, who accompanied him, carried the basin of water. The priest censed this room and sprinkled the whole of it, together with the mattress on which the dead had lain, with the water. This terminated the ceremony, and the priest and his *ʿarīf* departed for the desert monastery.

There is a common belief among the Copts of the peasant class that this sprinkling of the water in the house drives away the soul of the person who has died. This use of the water together with the incense is probably in origin a purificatory rite, cleansing the house and the inhabitants from the contamination of death, though such a belief, at any rate among the peasants, does not appear to exist at the present day.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

FA 302 A [463]

The men's custom of cutting the hair short or shaving their heads entirely (p. 57) is very ancient. Paintings of barbers shaving or cropping men's heads occur in two tomb-chapels of the Middle [1] and in one of the New Kingdom.[2] In the New Kingdom painting (Fig. 157) the barbers are quite clearly plying their trade out of doors, as they so often do at the present day. The well-known *Instruction of Duauf* speaks of the barber shaving "late into the evening, . . . he betaketh himself from street to street in order to seek him whom he may shave." [3]

FIG. 157. ANCIENT EGYPTIAN BARBERS AT WORK
After W. Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altaegyptischen Kulturgeschichte*, Pl. 44.

FA [765]

The custom of shaving off the body hair (p. 57) is certainly ancient. Herodotus,[4] it is true, speaks of it only in connexion with the priests, but there is some evidence that it was practised by both sexes, as at the present day.[5] Herodotus [6] tells us that "the Egyptians, on occasions of death, let the hair grow both on the head and on the face, though till then wont to shave." This custom still obtains, as can be seen from my statements on p. 58.

FA 291 A [113]

Two articles of clothing, the veil for women and the *gallabīyeh*, may be quite ancient. There is possibly a reference to the former

[1] See L. Klebs, *Die Reliefs und Malereien des mittleren Reiches* (Heidelberg, 1922), p. 41; *cf.* also A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
[2] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, Pl. 20, Fig. 1; W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pl. 44.
[3] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 69.
[4] ii, 37.
[5] See A. M. Blackman, "Purification (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, pp. 477, 481; *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. x, p. 200.
[6] ii, 36.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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in an inscription of Ramesses III at Medīnet Habu,[1] and the Egyptian peasants seem to have been wearing a garment very like the latter, only sleeveless, by the early Ptolemaic period, judging from the reliefs in the tomb of Petosiris at Derweh;[2] but the *gallabīyeh* may date back even to the Sixth Dynasty.[3] It should be observed that women wearing veils on their heads like those worn by the modern peasant women in many parts of Egypt occur several times in those reliefs in the tomb of Petosiris that are executed in Greek style.[4]

It might here be mentioned that blue was the colour for mourning in ancient Egypt,[5] and that dark blue as well as black is still the mourning colour in modern Egypt (see pp. 50, 111, 264, 295).

I have not, as I should, referred in the previous chapters to the custom of washing before and after a meal and before private and public prayers. This is a very old custom and is often referred to in the ancient Egyptian literary and religious texts.[6]

It was evidently considered as important to have a large family in ancient as it is in modern Egypt (see p. 97). The sage Anii advises his son to "take a wife when thou art a youth, that she may give thee a son. Thou shouldst beget him for thee whilst thou art yet young, and shouldst live to see him become a man [?]. Happy is the man who hath much people, and he is respected because of his children."[7]

Several of the ceremonies connected with birth can be shown to be of ancient origin. Apart from the reference in the Old Testament,[8] the existence of professional midwives in ancient Egypt is suggested by the account of the birth of the divinely begotten triplets of Red-djedet in the tales of *King Kheops and the Magicians*, which dates from the time of the Twelfth Dynasty (2000–1788 B.C.).[9] In earliest times the Egyptian women squatted to

[1] J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records*, vol. iv (Chicago, 1906), § 47.
[2] M. G. Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, vol. iii (Cairo, 1924), Pls. XII–XV.
[3] See W. M. F. Petrie, *Deshasheh* (London, 1898), pp. 31 f.
[4] M. G. Lefebvre, *op. cit.*, Pls. XIX, XX, XLXVI.
[5] A. H. Gardiner, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*, vol. xlvii, pp. 162 f.
[6] For a number of interesting references see A. M. Blackman, "Purification (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, pp. 477, 480 f., *Luxor and its Temples*, p. 7, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. v, pp. 153, 154 and note 5.
[7] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 235.
[8] Exodus i, 16.
[9] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, pp. 44 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

and his *bai* (soul, or manifestation [1]) outside the door of his tomb [2] (Fig. 165).

The weekly visit to the cemetery, the *Ṭala'*, described on pp. 117 ff., and the performances there during the Muslim festivals of *el-'Îd eṣ-Ṣughaiyar* and *el-'Îd el-Kibîr* (pp. 259 ff.), and on the Coptic festival of *Yōm el-Ghiṭās*, are all undoubtedly survivals from the past. From the earliest times it was the custom to honour the memory of the dead at certain definite periods by celebrating the funerary liturgy in the tomb-chapel or at the graveside. This liturgy consisted mainly in presenting the deceased with numerous articles of food and drink, which at an early date acquired a mystical significance. But through the whole of Egyptian history the idea persisted that the dead must somehow or other be adequately supplied with food. The name given to this ancient rite was *prt*, meaning 'the coming forth' or 'going up,' and the word *Ṭala'* means exactly the same. From the same root is derived *ṭulū'*, used in the combination *ṭulū' esh-shems*, 'sunrise.' *Prt* has also this meaning in Egyptian. Both the Egyptian *pry* and the Arabic *ṭala'* are the ordinary verbs used, with the meaning 'to rise,' of the sun.

In ancient Egyptian *prt* (Arabic *ṭala'*), in its technical sense of 'ascent,' 'going up to,' or 'procession to' the necropolis, nearly always appears in the combination *prt-r-ḫrw*, a 'coming forth,' or a 'going up at the voice'—*i.e.*, with offerings to the cemetery, the 'voice' being originally that of the living king (Horus),[3] bidding the offerers draw nigh to the grave of his predecessor, the dead king (Osiris). Later, of course, the 'voice' was the voice of the funerary priest who replaced the king, Horus, at the funerals of his subjects, or who acted as the king's deputy at the royal tombs.

In the tomb-chapel of Methen, who lived at the end of the Third Dynasty, the following formula occurs:

> Grace granted by Anubis who presides in the necropolis, a coming-forth-unto-the-voice there by all his [*i.e.*, the deceased Methen's] villages [that formed his funerary endowment] on the *wag*-festival, . . . the first day of the month, the first day of the half-month, the first day of every week.[4]

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[1] A. H. Gardiner, *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, vol. xxxvii, p. 258.

[2] E. Naville, *Das aegyptische Todtenbuch der XVIII bis XX Dynastie*, vol. i (Berlin, 1886), Pl. CIV; S. Birch, *Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, vol. viii, pp. 386 ff.

[3] Nina de Garis Davies and A. H. Gardiner, *The Tomb of Amenemhēt*, p. 85.

[4] A. M. Blackman, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. iii, p. 32.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

Immediately below this text, and intimately connected with it, four women are to be seen, each carrying a basket of bread on her head and holding a vessel containing water in her right hand.[1] Such representations of men and women going in procession to the cemetery loaded with provisions are very common in tomb-chapels, especially in those of the Old and Middle Kingdoms. Very conspicuous in these scenes are the baskets containing articles of food, generally borne on the heads of women as they are at a modern *Ṭala'*, and of exactly the same shape as those used for that purpose to-day. A similar text to that just quoted, and dating probably from the Sixth Dynasty, reads as follows: "A coming-forth-unto-the-voice for him in his tomb-chapel at the monthly and half-monthly festival, on the firsts of the seasons, the firsts of the months, and the firsts of the weeks."[2] In later times this weekly offering seems often to have degenerated into a mere pouring out of water, accompanied by the recitation of formulæ, a custom still surviving in Lower Nubia and parts of Upper Egypt.[3] With regard to this weekly graveside ceremony, it might be pointed out that Isis of Philæ was supposed to perform it at the 'Holy Place' on the island of Bīgeh, the burial-place of Osiris, doubtless in the capacity of a wife visiting the grave of her dead husband.[4]

Prt occasionally occurs in its funerary significance without the following *r-ḫrw*, and then it seems generally to be accompanied by the attribute *'ȝt*, 'great'—*i.e.*, 'the great going forth,' or, to use the modern equivalent, 'Great *Ṭala'*.'[5] For example, a man prays that on the day in which he departs this life there may be "a great going forth of my fellow-townsfolk."[6] The same expression is used in *The Decree of Canopus*, where it is employed to denote the annual commemoration of the death of the deified Berenike.[7] In the Greek version of this last-mentioned inscription *prt 'ȝt* is rendered *μέγα πένθος*, 'great lamentation,' an indication that those taking part in this 'going forth' wailed at the graveside, and probably also on their way there and back, as is the custom in modern times.

[1] C. R. Lepsius, *Denkmaeler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien* (Berlin, 1849–58), vol. ii, Pl. 5.
[2] A. M. Blackman, *loc. cit.*
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*, with note 4 and the following pages.
[5] Used without the attribute *'ȝt* when denoting the 'procession' of Upwawet in the Osirian mysteries; see H. Schäfer, *Die Mysterien des Osiris in Abydos* (Leipzig, 1904), p. 21.
[6] H. Schäfer, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
[7] *Ibid.*

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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ting to the burial-chamber in order to unite with the mummy which rests there (Fig. 166). The idea that the dead resided

FIG. 167. WIDOW BEWAILING HER DEAD HUSBAND
After W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pl. 417.

in their tombs as well as in the realm of Osiris or in heaven with the sun-god is to be found in Egyptian religious texts of all periods.[1]

An ancient painting (Fig. 167) depicting a widow bewailing her husband at one of her weekly or less frequent periodical visits

FIG. 168. ANCIENT POTTERS
After F. Cailliaud, *Recherches sur les arts et les métiers* (Paris, 1831), Pl. 16.[2]

FIG. 169. ANCIENT POTTERS
After F. Cailliaud, *ibid.*[2]

to his tomb may be compared with one of my photographs (Fig. 150) of a modern widow similarly engaged.

[1] *E.g.*, A. Erman, *Handbook of Egyptian Religion* (London, 1907), pp. 106 ff.; see, too, F. Ll. Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests*, pp. 15, 38.
[2] See also P. E. Newberry, *Beni Hasan*, Part II, Pl. 7.

consist of a red, pink or varicoloured petticoat and wide coloured drawers. The *fellaha* does her own rather clumsy sewing, but the cloth is bought.

The cotton stuffs, calicos and other fabrics used for the fellah's clothing come mostly from Japan, Italy and India. Imports from other countries are becoming more and more insignificant as the Egyptian weaving industry develops. The indigo or black dyes are produced in the country, and all the clothes are made up in Egypt. *Gallabiyas* and dresses are made to measure; shirts, drawers, waistcoats and caps are ready-made. Jewish commission agents often undertake to supply the big villages with the necessary quantities of material or ready-made clothes. The goods are sold just before the big feasts. The old wool-spinners and local weavers provide only a small part of the total supply (11).

The dullness of the women's attire is relieved by striking ornaments. Round the neck they wear strings of big yellow or blue beads; on their wrists a number of bracelets made, according to wealth or fancy, of glass, silver or even gold; on their ankles the *kholkhal*, a massive anklet of bronze, silver or gold, which takes the place of our wedding ring and must always be worn by a married woman. Everything else may be sold, but not this. If there is a bereavement in the family a woman lays aside her ear-rings, necklaces, and bracelets; the *kholkhal* she takes off only on the death of her lord and master. The women never wear socks or stockings, but sometimes use sandals or slippers like the men.

This strikingly simple clothing betokens an old civilisation and a supple adaptability to climate and practical needs. The fellah's loose, simple clothes permit him to breathe easily and to move freely. They keep the outlines of the human form in harmony with the countryside. On the other hand, they are dark-coloured and hot — the head-dress and the women's clothes at least — so that they absorb the sun's heat instead of reflecting it. Their excessive length hinders walking and stirs up the dust. However, the advantages outnumber the disadvantages, and the habits which have retained such a costume so long unchanged show a deep-rooted wisdom.

754 with the pre-Islamic and pre-Christian magic of Ancient Egypt.(51)

This affinity is confirmed by the faith of the fellaheen in everything that represents itself to be ancient, primitive, *qadîm*. For many of their superstitious beliefs they can give
792 no other reason. Why is a Coptic monk preferred as a
842 sorcerer? Why should the touching of ancient statues
777 make a woman conceive? Why should a pebble or written charm from the sorcerer give effect to a wish? Because it is *qadîm*. Because it holds in itself the power of the past.

764 The function of women mourners is also traditional. A
[765] fellah dies. At once loud cries from the womenfolk announce it to all the neighbourhood. The common bier is fetched from its place near the *gurn* outside the village. Women wash the body in warm water within the house, while outside rise the wailings of the mourning women.

In their funeral cries they boast of the beauty and fine qualities of the departed, they reproach God for taking him, they call to the dead man, to his wife and children, they cry out to Death itself. These complaints seem natural and improvised. In fact they are no more so than the tears of
[767 the professional mourners, wrapped in great veils (*milayas*)
535] specially for this ceremony, their face coloured black or blue as a sign of mourning, their heads sprinkled with mud. Leading the womenfolk in a ghastly dance, they rise, clap their hands, sway about and fall exhausted, now slackening, now hurrying their cries. Here the women take first place. The men put in an appearance, both at the funeral and on the visit of sympathy, for death is a part of public life. But they participate only by their presence; they say nothing. In silence they follow the bier, clasp the hand of the nearest relation, stay seated for some time by the dead man's house, and make their way home again(51a).

533 Other occasions, less frequent but more joyful, bring the
538 fellaheen together for music and story-telling. The man who brings them these hours of pleasure is the *sha'ir*, reciter, storyteller and singer all in one. He is himself a fellah, but an exceptionally gifted one. It is his melodious voice that has singled him out for the musician's life, but he also ac-
[534] companies himself on the *rebâba*, a single-stringed, sharp-toned violin. He will sing the praises of Mohammed or Jesus, describing the Prophet's appearance in naive, highly-

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Copts MR10

APPENDIX A

A NOTE ON MOURNING CUSTOMS

Both Christians and Moslems, at the feasts of Christmas and Easter, or the Little and Great Bairam (**), have a custom of going to pray at the tombs of their dead. On these days the cemetery takes on the appearance of a market, in which people of all conditions meet together. Families are continuously arriving. The camel is used to transport the provisions, bedding, boxes and kitchen-ware. Sometimes the Nile has to be crossed. The people crowd pell-mell into ferry boats, weighing them down till they are almost awash. The children, with their best clothes on, are delighted with the journey, but the women are weeping. When they visit the cemetery for the first time after a burial they cry out in grief, calling on the dead. Some of them stain their faces with blue and wave their handkerchiefs. I have seen old women scarcely able to walk and broken down by age and sickness, dragging themselves on this funeral pilgrimage, which they feel obliged to make, and from which they may never return.

Then the blood of sacrifice flows over the tomb, and the meat is given to the poor. Such libations and charitable offerings are supposed to comfort the souls of the dead. The goats and sheep, feeling their end approaching, cry aloud in despair. Yet in the dazzling sunshine, the clouds of dust, the tumult of the crowd, there is something of the holiday spirit. Hawkers temptingly display their wares, little cafés are opened, swings draw the children away. The families separate, each to visit its own. The upper part of the tomb is often built into a dome or living-space. Here the family will settle itself, to weep for hour after hour, or to sleep. Happy are the dead who are remembered, and happier still those for whom prayers are said.

When someone dies in the village, there is always a *mandara* (sitting-room) or a tent where the people go to offer

COMMENTARY

The mourner speaks in the person first of the dead man's friend, then of his mother, and finally also of the dead man himself, without any clear transition. Only the dead youth's words are put between quotation marks. F 764

4. The dead youth was his mother's only surviving son. To give her some consolation the mourner expresses a wish, which cannot be realised, to see children on sale in the market. Adoption is in Egypt an institution copied from abroad. In Upper Egypt it is still unknown even among Christians. Moslem law forbids it. C F [547]

5. To the mother the boy's writing-materials are precious reminders of his youthful promise.

6. Here the mourner describes the mother's dismay at the news of her son's death. The shock is so great that she can no longer put her clothes on straight. C F [152]

7. By Upper Egyptian women Sundays and festivals are observed as days for commemoration of the dead. To show their grief they keep away from church, even for years at a time. At Christmas and Easter the churches are deserted. On the other hand a crowd of women come to disturb the quiet of the cemetery with their tears and shrieks. This Pagan custom is to some extent Christianised by the distribution of gifts to the poor (meat, cakes, etc.) for the repose of the souls of the dead. C F 784 765 769 735

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

62.

Lamentations for the Dead.

539x 765

The lamentations of a mother over her fallen son, named 'Abbûḥ. As the mention of the coat of mail indicates, it is, without doubt, an old song, or, from the favorite tales of the adventures of renowned Arab heroes. [173]

Compare the remark on No. 21.

'Abbūḥ, ya 'Abbūḥ,
ibn-el-'arab madbūḥ,
wummo warâ bitnūḥ,
wit'ūl: ya waladi,
ya lābis ez-zaradî,
sikkinetak ḫūṣa
fil-arḍē marṣūṣa,
ma raṣṣēhāš illāni.

'Abbûḥ, 'Abbûḥ,
The Arab, is slain.
His mother mourns for him
And says: "O my son,
O thou who wearest the coat of mail, [714]
Thy sword is like a palm-leaf, [411]
Buried in the earth,
And no other than I has buried it."

6. "Like a palm-leaf" means, according to Maḥmûd: slender, pointed and two-edged.

7. The meaning of the last two lines is not very clear. Did the mother bury the dead together with his sword? Another of our men dictated: .... madfûse, ma raṣṣēhāš illāni, hence I translate: "bury".

[P 68 is blank]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

764 coffin, would be crushed by the clods of earth heaped over it. This excavation serves only as the entrance to a roomy earthen vault, hollowed out alongside of it, in which the body is placed, and is thus protected as well as if in a coffin. The entrance to the lateral vault is then built up with bricks, and during this lengthy operation the people standing around
[533] sing the melodious song "God pardon the Mohammedan men and Mohammedan women, the believing men and believing women" (*allahu maghfir el moslimin u el moslimat u el mumenin u el mumenat*). One of the scribes, an imam, a
775 schoolmaster, or the corpse-washer, delivers himself of a short
764 stereotyped funeral discourse, in which the deceased—who is no doubt straining his ears to listen—is instructed as to what he is to answer at the examination he will have to undergo in the coming night. Once more the confession of the Mohammedan faith is impressed upon him. For there come to
[776] test him two angels of horrid aspect, Nakir and Munkir by name, and torment him soul and body if he does not stand on the firm basis of Islam. Lastly, those present whisper
764 the *fatha*, and amid loud invocations to the gracious and all-merciful One, clod after clod is flung by them into the grave. The male members of the family who act as mourners place themselves in a row, receive the consolatory words and hand-shaking of the people who have come along with them, and every one hastens to the place whence he has come.

●765 In the night we hear behind the walls of the house of mourning the shrieking of women, now wound off in the trochees of a machine in action, anon in the dactyls of the steam-horse thundering along at full speed, or breaking up into the indefinite clack of a mill. Briskly is the kettle-drum beaten, and high up, from time to time, like a rocket, rises a shriek from a hundred throats. The earth gives out a hollow sound from the stamping of the feet of the filth-besmeared women. It sounds like an ungovernable outburst
[535] of joy and revelry; it is the corpse dance, through which the
[154] wife gives vent to her stormy grief.

The men, however, pass the "night of loneliness" with their friends and neighbours before the house or in a neigh-

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

bouring court-yard, drinking coffee and enveloped in clouds 765 ●
of tobacco-smoke. At the entrance or exit of a sympathizing neighbour, though he has merely come to sip a small cupful of coffee, the mourners rise and are addressed with such customary phrases of consolation as, "Such is life; but you are still alive yourself." General and individual conversations go on, in which some of the mourners take an active part, [152]
while others, bathed in tears, sit dumb in a corner. In an adjoining room lean schoolmasters occupy themselves with chanting the "book that cannot be doubted," or murmur a three-thousand-fold "Allah," in order to induce God to pity the poor soul of him who has gone to his rest. This mourning reception with coffee lasts for three days if the deceased was grown up, and the near relatives and friends remain together even during the night and take a common meal.

On the following days we hear in the house of mourning [533]
such a sorrowful, slow, monotonous song of lamentation, uttered in a low tone by a company of women, and mingled with weeping and sobbing, that it thrills painfully through bone and marrow. Thus for years does a mother or wife 769
bewail one whom she has loved and lost, on certain days of the week, or on certain days of the year consecrated to the memory of the dead, collecting her female friends, relatives, and neighbours, and especially practised mourning women, in order to relieve her sorrowful heart, and to have the virtues of the deceased duly sung; while the men gather round them a company of their friends and cause the Koran to be [191]
read in memory of their lost ones. Among the ancient [533]
Egyptians similar mourning hymns were sung during the period of seventy days that the body was being embalmed. The great festivals also do not pass without visits being made to the graves of dear ones, as we have seen above.

Thus does Islam honour its dead.

[pp. 204–408 not Processed]